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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 001487

SIPDIS

NAIROBI PASS TO PAMELA BELLAMY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [EINV](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK SHORT, BUT SWEET

1. (U) SUMMARY: This year's International Education Week (IEW) was successful, despite the fact that the Eid, paired with the Muslim work-week, shortened observance to three and a half days. Embassy-sponsored events included a soccer tournament, book donations, a lecture, art exhibitions, an Ambassadorial visit to a local school, and a lunch for children at the Ambassador's residence. The week's showcase was the school-to-school exchange project. END SUMMARY

2. (U) Embassy Djibouti's participation in International Education Week (IEW) was a school exchange organized by the Public Diplomacy Officer. One hundred and fifty Djiboutian elementary/Middle School students from three schools drew pictures, wrote essays and created skits to express the theme "A Day in My Life." Three Ohio schools were identified to do the same. The projects will be packaged and mailed to their counterparts in each country. Photos were taken at every event and will be burned to compact discs for each of the six participating schools (US and Djibouti), the Ministry of Education and the Embassy.

3. (U) The Embassy provided beads, paint, macaroni and tissue paper to the Djiboutian schools that focused their IEW projects on art, due to a lack of English speakers. The Public Diplomacy Officer encouraged involvement by visiting the classrooms of participating schools over the course of November.

4. (U) Other Embassy-sponsored events included a book donation to Middle School students, a panel about how to study in the U.S. for college students and a football tournament for high school students. The events were exceptionally successful exchanges that stressed not only the importance of education but also the bilateral relationship. Post was impressed by some of the sensitive themes explored by the students, including environmental pollution and female genital mutilation. Ideally, the relationship will continue between the US schools and the Djiboutian schools throughout the year with pen pal letters and other school-directed exchanges.

5. (U) A breakdown of IEW events, with results, follows. Please note that all events were conducted in French, unless otherwise noted.

On November 16:

-- IEW officially opened with banners over all of the town's main entrances. The Public Diplomacy Officer visited each of the schools for a project exhibition and handed out t-shirts to every participating student and teacher with the Department's official IEW logo (translated into French), and the slogan "Rapprocher les systems educatifs Djibouti-Etats-Unis D'Amerique." The Public Diplomacy Officer also met with the Parent's Associations at some of the schools to discuss the importance of education.

On November 17:

-- Ambassador attended an exhibition and ceremony at Charles D. Foucault Middle School and, in conjunction with the Minister of Education, passed out t-shirts to participating students - who are part of an English class. She also passed out two books in English to each student, "The Prince and the Pauper" and "Girls Who Rocked the World." (This is the school that did not receive a materials donation). The ceremony was covered by the local media.

-- The Public Diplomacy Officer gave a radio interview on the importance and goals of International Education Week.

-- The Public Diplomacy Section hosted a panel discussion at the local university titled, "So You Want to Study in the US." The panel consisted of a short presentation by a representative from the International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH) and was followed by a question and answer session. An IFESH teacher, the Djibouti IFESH coordinator, Embassy Djibouti's Consular Officer and Embassy Djibouti's TOEFL Administrator comprised the panel. About 75 people attended.

On November 18:

-- Twelve students, chosen by teachers from the

participating classes for their high potential, attended a peanut butter and jelly and chocolate chip cookie lunch at the Ambassador's residence, followed by a tour of the residence and Embassy grounds by the Ambassador and the Public Diplomacy Officer.

-- The visit was followed by a tour of an exhibition set-up in an Embassy conference room of all the student's IEW projects, so each could see the efforts of the other schools.

-- The first round of an IEW girl's football tournament, organized by the Embassy for middle and high school aged girls, took place. Eleven teams, from both Djiboutian and French schools, took part and the number of spectators on the first night exceeded 200 people. Each participant received an IEW t-shirt (in different colors for each team).

On November 19:

* Tournament finals. The winning team in each division received a trophy donated by a local vendor. A third trophy was awarded for sportsmanship.